



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

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CONTACT:

U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
MARVIN SMILON, HERBERT HADAD,
MICHAEL KULSTAD
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 637-2600

**U.S. CHARGES MANHATTAN WOMAN WITH LYING
TO OBTAIN 9/11 RELIEF MONEY FOR DOWNTOWN HOUSING**

JAMES B. COMEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that AZMAY SHAHZADA, 25, a resident of Manhattan, was charged Wednesday with theft of government money and mail fraud in connection with a scheme to defraud the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) of federal grant money made available after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks to assist in the revitalization of Lower Manhattan.

A two-count criminal Complaint charged that SHAHZADA devised a scheme to fraudulently obtain money from a grant program established by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation to retain and attract residents to Lower Manhattan. As the Complaint explains, the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) was created by the State and City of New York after the terrorist attacks to coordinate the rebuilding and

revitalization of Lower Manhattan, defined as the area south of Houston Street. To further this goal, the LMDC received HUD grant money to fund the Two-Year Commitment-Based Grant program, which provides money to eligible individuals who make a two-year commitment to live in one of two designated zones in Lower Manhattan. The HUD grant money also funds a one-time grant of \$1,000 to individuals who, on September 11, 2001, resided in one of three designated zones in lower Manhattan and continued to reside there through the date of their grant application.

According to the Complaint, on September 24, 2002, SHAHZADA filled out and submitted an application to the LMDC to obtain money under the September 11, 2001 Residents' Grant and the Two-Year Commitment-Based Grant, to which she attached a copy of her lease for 100 John Street, Apt. 2607, which showed that it was for the two-year period of March 1, 2002, to February 29, 2004.

It is alleged that, in this application and according to the terms of the grant, SHAHZADA certified that she currently lived and intended to live at 100 John Street in lower Manhattan for two years. The Complaint alleges that LMDC later approved SHAZHADA's application, which made SHAHZADA eligible to receive a one-time \$1,000 September 11 Residents' grant, and approximately \$250 a month in grant money over the two-year period she promised to live at 100 John Street.

Nonetheless, the Complaint alleges that SHAZHADA moved out of her apartment at 100 John Street on or about February 28, 2003, as documented by, among other things, a copy of her lease obtained from the managing agent for the 100 John Street building, which showed that her lease term was through February 28, 2003, not February 29, 2004, as SHAHZADA had represented in her LMDC application; a "walk-through" form, regarding the condition of her apartment, signed by SHAHZADA upon her departure from 100 John Street, Apt. 2607, dated February 28, 2003; and a United States Postal Service change of address request signed by SHAHZADA, dated January 31, 2003, requesting mail forwarding as of February 15, 2003. In the "walk through" form and the change of address request, SHAHZADA indicated that her new address was 30 West 63 Street, Apt. 20L, which is not in the lower Manhattan zones eligible for the LMDC funds.

The Complaint further alleges that, although SHAHZADA vacated her residence at 100 John Street, SHAHZADA sought to obtain money under the September 11, 2001 Residents' Grant and LMDC's Two-Year Commitment-Based Grant by falsely representing that she was still residing at 100 John Street. According to the Complaint, SHAHZADA repeatedly stated falsely to the LMDC that she was currently residing at 100 John Street, and sought to receive the grant money based upon that representation. It is

further alleged that, on June 20, 2003, SHAHZADA went to an LMDC office in Lower Manhattan, stated falsely that she still resided at 100 John Street, and presented documents which purported to show that she still lived at 100 John Street, including a document which appeared to have been altered. After lying about her current address at this meeting, the Complaint alleges that SHAHZADA obtained a check from the LMDC for \$3,750, which constituted the \$1,000 one-time payment under the September 11, 2001 Residents' Grant and the \$250 monthly grant payments to SHAHZADA from March 1, 2002 through January 2003 - the time that SHAHZADA claimed to have been living at 100 John Street.

If convicted, SHAHZADA faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison for mail fraud and 10 years in prison for theft of government property. Each charge also carries a maximum fine of \$250,000.

Mr. COMEY praised the investigative efforts and cooperation of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, the Office of the Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the United States Postal Inspection Service.

United States Assistant United States Attorney
JESSICA A. ROTH is in charge of the prosecution.

The charges in the Complaint are merely allegations,

and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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